



Archie's First Day at the Farm.

BY HATTIE LOUISE JEROME.

"We'll teach him a thing or two," nodded Ben.

"Cousin Archie? Well, yes," chuckled Ned. "I guess when he goes home, he'll think a city chap can learn a little something on a farm."

"Hm-m!" sniffed the hired man. "Ye needn't s'pose you're a-goin' ter dew all the teachin'. They larn some mighty cur'us things down ter them New York skewls nowadays."

But the boys were not convinced. They only looked at each other and winked as they went on with their work. Ben was turning the grindstone for the hired man to sharpen his scythe. Ned was slowly pouring on the water in a tiny stream from the tin dipper.

Across the yard, little Annie was swinging on the stout gate at the end of the gravel walk. Every time the gate swung out beyond the hedge which separated the farm from the grass-bordered village road, the little girl took a long look down the road; and when, at the other end of the exhilarating little journey, it shut together with a sharp bang that would have jerked a less experienced rider from her position, the child glanced up to the window where mamma sat sewing, and then to the door of the shed near which her brothers were at work, and shook her small head in a way that clearly said, "Not yet."

Cousin Archie was coming from the city to spend a few weeks on the farm. Papa had gone to the station to meet him; mamma had cooked great pans of cookies and doughnuts, and baked several extra pies and chocolate layer-cake; and the two boys, Ben and Ned, were prepared to slip behind the barn out of sight at a moment's notice.

At last came a glad cry from the gate: "Here they come! here they come!" A flying figure disappeared up the road, to return seated in triumph on her father's knee, driving with her small browned hands the noble span of great farm-horses.

"Archie has never seen a cow milked," his mother had written, "or watched the hen with her chickens, or seen the pigs fed, or heard the croaking of the frogs, or picked berries. I'm sure he will be very happy with you, for he is always eager to learn, and his cousins can teach him so much that will be new and interesting."

"Such a little greenie!" Ben had said, with much importance. "Probably he won't know a hen from a turkey, and will think the pigs ought to take a morning bath every day before breakfast!" Ben was thirteen years old, and so was, of course, very wise—at least so thought Ned, who was only eleven, and Annie who was but nine—just Archie's age.

"Want to go after the cows with us," invited Ben, soon after Archie's arrival that afternoon.

"Yes, indeed," assented Archie. "Where are they?"

"They're attending a social down by the bars," said Ben. "We can't send the carriage for them to-night, so we'll have to go down and see them home."

"How funny he talks," thought Archie. "He must be a very droll boy. I'm sure I shall like him," but he said nothing.

"Took it all in, didn't he?" chuckled Ned. "He'll learn some things before he's a day older!"

Cows look so large when they are coming straight toward you! Archie was not in the least used to such familiarity; and although his cousins would have been more terror-stricken in crossing Broadway, they were greatly amused to see him dodge and make

for a stone wall when a peaceful old cow came lounging toward him.

"Wave your arms at 'em," instructed little Annie. "You can shoo 'em 'most as easy as hens!"

"Now," asked Ben, "which shall I show you first—the one from which we milk molasses, or the one which gives kerosene?"

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed Archie, cordially. "What a droll boy you are! But, Cousin Ben, I wish you'd just hold one of their mouths open a moment, so I could look down and see the gullet where the cud goes first."

What do you mean, Cousin Archie?" Annie asked.

"Why, you know, the cow carries a sort of lunch-basket around with her," explained Archie, merrily. "When she finds a nice clump of grass, she bites it off and rolls it up with her tongue into a ball, and packs it away in a kind of a pouch. Then when she's where she can't feed, she brings it up and chews and chews on it, and that time it goes down into her stomach and is digested. I wonder"—he broke off, turning to the boys—"if a cow ever chews the same cud over twice? Does she?"

"I'm sure I don't know," confessed Ben.

Cows had always been so familiar to them, neither Ben nor Ned had ever thought of studying them in this way.

"This cow is chewing her cud," announced Ben, rather ashamed not to do what his cousin asked, yet not daring to attempt it.

Down on his knees Archie watched eagerly. "Why," he said in surprise, "she seems to bring it up from somewhere down near her stomach. I thought, perhaps, as she had a pouch in her cheeks, same as the little harvest mouce, and some kinds of monkeys do."

Ben was making a great show of letting one of the cows lap salt from his hand.

"How brave you are!" cried his small cousin. "Do you suppose I'll ever dare do it?"

"It's easy enough," answered Ned, giving another cow a handful of meal. "They like salt and meal."

"Yes, I know they like salt. No animal could live without it. But don't you think the cow is the most interesting animal you know?"

"Oh, no," answered Ben, quickly. "I like elephants, and tigers, and lions! Did you ever see any of them?"

"Oh, yes," answered Archie, simply; "we learn about all the animals, in school, and in our Natural History Club. Why, even when I was a baby in the kindergarten, we learned all the uses of the cow—aren't there lots of them? And yet I'd never seen a cow milked, or been very near one. Isn't it strange?"

"The cows and oxen aren't so useful now as they used to be," instructed Ben, wisely. "You don't see many oxen used around here. Of course they still get milk, and all kinds of beef from them, and leather, but that's about all."

"And glue," added Archie, "and hair for plaster; and they use the bones and horns for ever so many things."

"Glue—from a cow!" exclaimed Ben, incredulously.

"Yes, indeed," answered Archie, "from the hoofs and ears and odd bits of hide—and glue is used for so many things. Did you know it was used to glaze paper and straw hats? I didn't, till I went into a straw shop and a paper-mill."

"No," admitted the two brothers, becoming interested.